

VZCZCXRO5987
PP RUEHBI RUEHLMC
DE RUEHLM #0274/01 0441231
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 131231Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5439
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0214
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0215
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9903
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6851
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4921
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3542
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0638
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3631
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2711
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7421
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5142
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1813
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000274

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS
MCC FOR S GROFF, D NASSIRY, E BURKE AND F REID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: MODERATE TAMILS SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Ambassador MET on February 9 with Ahilan Kadirgamar of the Sri Lanka Democracy Forum, a group of moderate Tamil expatriates. Kadirgamar, who is based in the U.S., was critical of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) monopoly over Tamil politics and saw the breakaway of the Karuna faction from the LTTE as a political opening for the Tamil community. In Kadirgamar's view, the LTTE's real support base, both political and financial, lies in the diaspora and not within Sri Lanka. He stressed that human rights abuses must be curtailed or the peace constituency will vanish. Kadirgamar urged the U.S. to push the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) on the peace process and to try to get India more involved. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Blake met on February 9 with Ahilan Kadirgamar of the Sri Lanka Democracy Forum, a group of moderate Tamil expatriates working toward peace and greater respect for human rights. Kadirgamar was critical of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and their monopoly over Tamil politics. In his view, the breakaway of the Karuna faction from the LTTE presents a political opening and opportunity for the Tamil community. The Karuna group is the first to challenge the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamil people, he said. He suggested that the Karuna group be made part of the military, to legitimize Karuna's relationship with the GSL and to help make it more accountable for human rights abuses.

¶3. (C) In Kadirgamar's view, the LTTE's real support base, both political and financial, lies in the diaspora and not within Sri Lanka. Reaching out to the diaspora to broaden its view of the conflict is a challenging yet necessary task. The Ambassador suggested that once a devolution proposal is put forward, it should be taken to the Tamil diaspora for support and comments. A message from the Tamil diaspora encouraging the LTTE to accept a settlement could help push the LTTE to engage seriously. Kadirgamar agreed to help the Embassy reach out to the diaspora when and if a legitimate

devolution proposal is on the table. The Ambassador also suggested that Kadirgamar share his ideas on devolution with Tissa Vitharana, the Chairman of the All-Party Representative Committee. The Ambassador emphasized that the current government under Mahinda Rajapaksa presents an opportunity as well as a challenge. While the President is somewhat beholden to the conservative South, his ties to that constituency also give him the credibility and clout to sell them a political solution.

¶4. (C) Kadirgamar stressed that human rights abuses must be curtailed. If they continue, he warned, the peace constituency will vanish. The Ambassador and Kadirgamar agreed that if nothing substantial comes out of the new Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights, more intrusive measures like international human rights monitors will need to be considered. The Ambassador emphasized that he is pushing the GSL to address the human rights situation and the systematic failure of GSL institutions to deal with human rights. Kadirgamar suggested an internal monitor for the military, possibly a well known general, to observe and help clean up the security forces. (NOTE: we subsequently learned that such a unit, led by a Brigadier General, already exists.)

¶5. (C) Kadirgamar was supportive of Norway's effort to facilitate the peace process, but thought that the Norwegians made a mistake by failing to engage Prabhakaran directly. Kadirgamar urged the U.S. to push the GSL on the peace process and to try to get India more involved. The Ambassador said we fully support Norway's facilitation efforts, but we also have been engaged with the Indians.

COLOMBO 00000274 002 OF 002

Kadirgamar observed that it may be hard for the GSL to go back to the Cease-Fire Agreement now that new military gains have been made.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Kadirgamar was an engaging interlocutor who offered some fresh thoughts on the conflict. However, the role he sees for the Karuna Group fails to take into account the group's violent tactics, and blatant violations of human rights. The USG should follow up with Kadirgamar (and others) if and when the time comes get input on a devolution proposal from the Tamil diaspora.
BLAKE